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POLITICAL
DIALOGUES

UPON THE SUBJECT OF

EQUALITY.

THE SECOND EDITION.



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TO THE
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THE subject of Equality, so generally agitated in the political conversations of the day, being thought by some dangerous to the good order of society; and as Mr. Justice Ashurst, in his charge to the Grand Jury, Nov. 19th, took an opportunity to express his disapprobation of such doctrines; I have ventured to attempt to elucidate the subject, according to the best of my abilities, in the most simple way, and in which I have not aimed so much at new ideas as to explain, and, if possible, prevent the influence of those opposite doctrines, which coming from the bench, are calculated to check that spirit of enquiry so necessary to enlighten the reasoning powers

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of man, and which ultimately must tend to perfect the object of civilization, by the blandishments of truth and reason.

It would be more to the honour of the pretended friends of order, were they not to fall directly into the very errors of which they accuse the advocates of the Rights of Man, established upon principles of equality. These are the words of Mr. Justice Ashurst :

“ But in order that these blessings”
 (alluding to the blessings of the government) “ should be continued, it was
 “ necessary that mankind should be convinced of the mischief likely to result
 “ from the doctrine of the perfect equality of man ; and that whatever might
 “ appear to speculative men, in a state
 “ of society, we could not subsist without
 “ a proper subordination and respect to
 “ the power of the state : there must
 “ be a higher power, and that power
 “ must be in such hands as the constitution had thought fit to place it*.”

Now it must appear clear, I apprehend, to the most superficial observers,

* Morning Chronicle, Tuesday, Nov. 20, 1792.

that

that such sentiments are given with an intention to hoodwink the people ; if they proceed from ignorance, they are equally as dangerous to an enlightened policy, by representing their friends as aiming at the overthrow of all subordination to law, which is mere assumption ; for I will venture to affirm, there never was an idea of the kind promulged by any thinking man.

However, such assertions would not merit any consideration, were they not delivered from the seat of justice, which ought to be the throne of TRUTH. But when inconsistencies are mingled with what is intended to instruct, and idle declamation, such as “ and yet there were “ men of dark and malignant spirits, “ who would wish to overthrow and to- “ tally destroy our excellent constitu- “ tion, the glorious work of the wisdom “ of ages, and give us in return anarchy “ and confusion*,” it would be remiss to let them pass unnoticed ; for it is by investigation that the capacities of men will be illumined, when they will be able to judge with precision which party are

* Morning Chronicle, Tuesday, Nov. 20, 1792.

most sincerely engaged in the cause of extending the blessings of wholesome government.

This whole speech, which is a mere rhapsody of words, but delivered to the most respectable body of men in the world, I mean a BRITISH GRAND JURY, has such puerile features, decorated with so many withered plumes, and contains such a number of hackneyed ideas, that I do not think it worth my while to notice it, any farther than to recommend it to the consideration of all candid men, as the most effectual means of proving its fallacy, and of detecting the combination of nonsense it contains.

It is not by looking at the prosperous side of a country, that we are enabled to judge fairly of the blessings of its government ; but we must look at the miserable part of its inhabitants, and examine into the cause of their sufferings ; and whenever it is found that the policy of states has been relevant to the calamities of its citizens, it is time for the people to ameliorate their political system ; for if man did give up part of his privileges to
secure

secure the more important, it never was his intention to support a system which ran counter to the object of his concession:—such an idea would not only be absurd, but it would be nugatory, as his rights in a state of society ought and do exist; and no power under heaven has authority, or can abridge them in any manner, which is not essential to the government of his passions, the promotion of his comfort, and the extension of his happiness in an equal manner.

It is the business of every government in the world, not only to promote the felicity of the people by every means in their power, but they are bound to protect them against every species of oppression; and whenever they do not secure these ends, it is time they were amended.

Every man, however low his situation in life, has the same feelings, the same rights, and is equally interested in the advantages of government, as the proudest nobleman.

As to talking of the prosperity of this country, it has nothing to do with the argument. It is a matter of course, from
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the natural accumulation of the capitals employed in trade, and the progress of arts and manufactures, as Dr. Adam Smith has ably demonstrated, to the conviction of all men of common sense.

The business to be considered is, are the poor decreasing? are there less debtors in the prisons than there were (read the Report from the Committee appointed to enquire into the practice and effects of imprisonment for debt)? are the middling class of the people, the supporters of the state, bettered in their situation, or have their burthens been diminished?

These are questions I know sophistry may get over; but truth and philosophy must acknowledge that the benefits of civilization have not been equally extended, which proves that there is something radically defective in our political system.

A FRIEND TO EQUALITY.

Monday,
November 26, 1792.

POLITICAL

POLITICAL
DIALOGUES.

DIALOGUE I.

LORD DESPOTISM. I HAVE been informed, **EQUALITY**, that you have been initiated into one of those diabolical clubs, which are aiming, by the most wicked measures, to overthrow all regard for rank and power.

CITIZEN EQUALITY. I have the honour, my lord, to belong to one of those clubs, which you are pleased to term diabolical; and, if to destroy the influence of despotism, which a reverence for unnatural distinctions have too long supported, to the disgrace of mankind, be considered as wicked, I glory in the atrocity.

LORD DES. Sir, you are an incendiary. And by aiming at the destruction of our
B venerable

venerable and glorious constitution, which has been the work of ages, and the admiration of the whole world, you will only prepare for yourself the disgrace of the pillory, and the horrors of a dungeon; where criminals are equally wretched and contemptible.

EQUA. It is the object of our society to disseminate knowledge—extend the blessings of reason, and, by elevating the human character, lessen that contempt which unruly power has too often annexed to the most virtuous inclinations, and left an indelible stain upon the humanity of modern governments.

LORD DES. Your ignorance, EQUALITY, is the only excuse for your folly.—But when folly is productive of political evil, it must be punished, as upon that the good order of his Majesty's realms depend.

To think of extending reason to the groveling multitude, is as chimerical and ridiculous, as it is in the alchymist to attempt to transmute stone into gold; and I
would

would advise you, fir, to withdraw yourself from these dangerous societies, and endeavour, by conforming to the will of power, to prove yourself a good subject.

EQUA. I am one of the groveling multitude, as you are pleased to term us ;—and, as contemptible as you may think me, I have hitherto had the moderation to treat your opinions with some degree of respect ; as I believed it was possible, that you might be biaſſed by education, and fixed by long habits of thinking in your political sentiments ;—but when a man becomes intolent, it proves he wants that reason you ſay the vulgar are not capable of receiving ; and nothing can more effectually evince to me, the advantages and neceſſity of equality among men, than the preſent inſtance your conduct has exhibited. For while you expect that your rank entitles you to declaim without argument, and your power to ſecure you impunity, you have dared to be impertinent, and have treated the ſentiments of the people in a manner too unbecoming to be paſſed unnoticed.

LORD DES. Do you know to whom you are talking, fir? Look at this star—it is the insignia of my dignity; and I will learn you to know, fir, that your levelling principles shall soon be suppressed; as I shall cause you to be apprehended for attempting to disturb the peace and good order of his Majesty's affectionate and dutiful *subjects*.

EQUA. My lord, I beg that you will compose yourself;—for though I am sensible of the many flagrant evils that spring out of our constitution, I am yet convinced that there is too much justice in our laws, and too much integrity in an English jury, for me to apprehend any danger from your threats.

LORD DES. The government is too moderate for the licentious spirit of the times; and the people have too long enjoyed that share of freedom, which has been the cause of those growing evils that seem to threaten the country with a general earthquake, if no measures are taken in time to stop the rage of principles, more dangerous than the inundations

undations of those barbarians who desolated Europe—prostrated the monuments of art, and spread a gloom over the minds of men, which it has required ten centuries to remove.

EQUA. If you will permit me, my lord, I shall take the liberty to observe, that you appear to me to draw your conclusions from prejudice, and to have confounded causes and effects in such a manner, as to prevent your rightly understanding the nature and extent of our political difference.

LORD DES. It is a new thing in the moral world, EQUALITY, for plebeians to attempt to instruct *the officers of government—the nobility of the realm—the palladium of the state, and the oracles of science and learning.*

EQUA. It doubtless is true, that learning, for a great length of time, was confined to the higher orders of society, and consequently that ignorance which you reprobate was too general;—of which, unfortunately

for mankind, the ingenious priests took advantage, and effectually rivetted the chains of superstition: and so it happened that those dark ages which you have mentioned for so long a time checked the progress of science and civilization:—But you may observe, by taking a retrospective glance over a few centuries back, and by comparing the difference of improvements, since the invention of printing, to what they ever were before that æra, the wonderful strides which reason and philosophy, in modern times, have made, to what they did previous to that date—and that knowledge, from being generally disseminated, has given an opportunity to all descriptions of men, to judge with precision in matters of law and government; and at the same time, every genius has a chance to prepare himself for the administration of the business of his country; to the offices of which, he ought to be eligible according to his virtues and talents; and when these privileges are secured to the citizens of a state, the benefits of civilization will become more equal, and every man will be respected according to the

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the appropriate knowledge he possesses, and the integrity of his actions.

LORD DES. But I understand you are aiming not only at the overthrow of all distinction of rank, but also at the distribution of property in an equal manner, and to place the beggar upon a footing with the King.

EQUA. We are neither aiming at the dissolution of rank or property.—Our object in the progress of knowledge, is, to adopt new truths in the place of old errors—to secure to every man the just premiums of his industry—to annex rank and distinction to virtue and talents—to afford every man an equal chance of receiving the rewards, and arriving at the honours, of his country—to destroy that system of aggrandizement which confers favours in proportion to the servility of its minions—and to annihilate that reverence for titles which is not connected with worth and judgment.

LORD

LORD DES. There is something very rational in your ideas, **EQUALITY**: But do you think that men are capable of attaining that degree of perfection, which you seem to expect?

EQUA. The fetters of a false religion, and the tyranny of government, in every part of Europe, have tended so effectually to coerce the human mind, that it is not wonderful if superficial observers have formed opinions unfavourable to the dignity of man, and the perfection of his reasoning faculties.—But you must view the object of states as different now, from what they were formerly.

LORD DES. What is the difference?

EQUA. Conquest and aggrandizement appears to have been the first object of almost all the governments in the world—happiness and protection to all orders of men are the present objects of society.

LORD

LORD DES. I confess, from what you have said, EQUALITY, it appears to me, that I have paid too slight an attention to this important subject, to be able to judge of it fairly. And I shall wish you a good morning; and when I have the pleasure to meet you again I will inform you of the result of my reflections.

EQUA. I wish you well, my lord, and I shall be glad to hear them.

DIALOGUE II.

LORD DES. **E**QUALITY, I hope I have the pleasure to find you in good spirits this morning?

EQUA. I rose with good spirits, my lord, but as I was going to my daily employment I overtook my neighbour, the curate of our parish, with misery so strongly marked in his countenance, that it gave a sudden damp to my feelings, which I have not since been able to recover.

LORD DES. What is the cause of his misery?

EQUA. He wants the common necessities of life for his numerous family, that has increased from his wife and himself to twelve in number, by the addition of ten children; and he has for their whole support not above thirty pounds annually, for which he does the duty of three parishes.

LORD

LORD DES. That is being paid very illy indeed; and I am at a loss to know how it is possible for his family to subsist.

EQUA. They barely exist, and it always gives me the most heart-felt pain when I reflect in how many instances there are miserable beings, of the most benevolent and virtuous dispositions, who are languishing under the tortures of penury and hunger—while the ostentatious and arrogant BISHOP wallows in superfluous riches, and unfeelingly forgets in his banquets, if he ever experienced such sensations, his sorrow for human misery;—I say forgets, my lord, for if he was a good *Christian*, he would not receive a salary so disproportionate to those of the inferior clergy, knowing, as he must, that many of them suffer for want of the common necessaries of life.

LORD DES. Why really, sir, there seems to be moral evils attending such distinctions:—But I have thought, in consequence of our first conversation, that attempting to alter our system, or by touching one part,
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we endanger the whole fabric; and that it would destroy that dignity and splendour in government, which influence the opinions of men, and produce that reverential awe, so necessary to secure a due subordination to law and justice.

EQUA. *Government, my lord, is established for the benefit of every individual of the state.—It ought to secure not only a man's property, but many other privileges, both civil and religious, and which to take from him is a subversion of the original compact, and the practice of despotism.—It is when innocence becomes the victim of oppression—when the hardy labourer sweats, not for his own comfort, but for the luxury of others—and when the perversion of laws, instead of securing the administration of justice, by reason of their complication, and the charges annexed to their process, puts it in the power of the wealthy and litigious to ruin the unfortunate and friendless, that the citizens of a state are called upon, by the feelings of humanity, to remove evils so cruel and disgraceful. Dignity and splendour, in the way you apply them,*

them, are mere words, without meaning ; for I cannot conceive how any reasonable man, or set of men, can wish to promote the glitter of pomp, and the unsubstantial pageantry of state, at the expence or comfort of one of its citizens ; and it is a subordination to justice alone, to which freemen will ever submit for any length of time.

LORD DES. Is not every man paid for his labour, and does he not choose his own religious worship ? And I cannot find what serious ground there is for any complaint upon those heads. As to the laws, I admit they have become very complicated ; but I am afraid that it would be very difficult to alter them for the better.

EQUA. Certainly men do not labour altogether for themselves, for, independent of the necessary government charges, great part of their earnings are extorted from them by the grinding hand of oppression, and given to support the extravagance of idle courtiers, who have no other merit, than by a contemptible and unmanly adulation,

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lation, making themselves favourites to men in power; or, who by a prostitution of principles that ought to degrade a reptile, stoop to actions as wicked as they are repugnant to the views of a just and enlightened policy. And, as to the privilege of worshiping God in the manner most agreeable to ourselves, it is true, we may—but is there not a hardship in being obliged to pay heavy charges to support an established religion, the ministers of which are the most licentious men in the kingdom; and when too, perhaps, it may be at variance with our religious sentiments.

Place yourself in the situation of the labouring man, my lord, and if you will candidly turn these considerations in your own mind, I think you must be convinced the oppressions of which the people of England complain, are not merely imaginary.

LORD DES. I begin to think there is some room for amendment in our system of government. But, I am afraid, as men are governed more by their passions than by their reason, and as it is difficult to foresee,
and

and determine, what is most proper for promoting general prosperity; and, as too great a share of political business put into the hands of the vulgar must always endanger the tranquillity of the state, by putting it in the power of the factious, by their intrigues and pretensions of patriotism, to influence the minds of the multitude, I confess I cannot fall immediately into your ideas; nor think it would be wise to intrust so much political power in their hands;—for they are generally violent, with little preception, and ready to follow the dictates of their leader into every extreme; and which would be productive of the most dreadful anarchy and confusion.

EQUA. Those are the evils our society are endeavouring to guard against.—For which reason, we wish improvements to be made in time, in order to prevent those false declaimers—those mock patriots, who are always ready to raise a clamour, by influencing the minds of the mob, who perhaps do not always understand the extent or fallacy of their object.

LORD DES. And yet, EQUALITY, you are taking the most effectual measures to produce the very evils, you say it is your object to prevent.

EQUA. There is a great difference, my lord, between the people and mobs—nature created the people—mobs are the offspring of oppression—and whenever states give fair play to the intellects of their citizens, the triumph of reason will intirely suppress the influence of those discontented animals, who, like ill-natured wits, are quick in discerning faults, and always notice them, more from the ambition of being thought superior, than with any serious views to produce amendment.

LORD DES. I think your distinction between the people and mobs a very just one; though, I confess, it never occurred to me before: and, if I could be convinced, that the dissemination of that knowledge upon which you seem to lay so much stress, would correct the vicious dispositions of men, I
then

then would most readily lay down my title and espouse your cause.

EQUA. If you will suffer me to be candid, my lord, I must repeat, that I think there is an apparent error in your whole mode of reasoning; for you continually mistake effects for causes, and causes for effects.

The dispositions of men are not naturally vicious; so far from it, that man is by nature a social being, otherwise society would never have existed; but the depraved habits, which governments and a mocked religion have made general for too long a time, has been mistaken for inherent perverseness; and while the objects of legislators have been directed to confine and degrade his manly temper, the spontaneous effusions of virtue, the evils they wished to prevent have been extended to a most licentious degree.

LORD DES. I have been so little accustomed to be talked to with candour, that I consider myself more obliged to you

already than any friend I ever had. But I shall be as ingenuous with you, by saying, though in general during our conversation you have been perspicuous, that there is an obscurity in your last reply, which I cannot comprehend.

EQUA. I am very happy to have an opportunity to explain myself. While it has been a common opinion that some men were by nature wicked, it has given opportunities to hypocrites, under the mask of religion, to pretend they possess a piety and virtue superior to their neighbours, and by ostentatiously appearing to take a superfluous interest in their future happiness, they have gained an influence in the common affairs of life, as dangerous as it has been oppressive:—and thus it has happened, that when their deceit was detected, the tricks of art have been played off, by that acquired cunning, to which men will ever have recourse when the honest and noble sentiments of the heart are deemed criminal.—Governments have favoured this deceit, and a tacit coalition has existed between the church
and

and state, to the total subversion of all moral sentiment.

LORD DES. I now comprehend you—
But these are too important considerations
to determine on hastily; so I wish you a
good day, and hope soon to have the pleasure
of seeing you again.

DIALOGUE III.

LORD DES. I HAVE avoided seeing you for some days, EQUALITY, as I found the importance of the subject agitated between us demanded my most serious consideration, as in it seems to be involved the future happiness of mankind:—and though I am fully sensible of the many advantages the world has derived from the dissemination of knowledge, yet I conceive your calculations are too sanguine respecting the moderation of the passions of men, and the perfection of his reasoning faculties.

EQUA. I am very happy, my lord, to find you have come prepared; as I flatter myself, if I fairly confute your objections to our views, that you will become an advocate for the establishment of society upon the basis of equality.

LORD DES. Most certainly.

EQUA. In the progress of governments the rights of men have been every where
strangely

strangely mutilated, and almost in every part of the world annihilated; so that it required the triumph of reason to restore them.

It was under the influence of those depredations that despotism usurped an illegal and unwarrantable power, to the great distress of mankind; and for a length of time has borne absolute sway.—Thus it happened, men became so habituated to their chains, that they were scarcely sensible of their oppression.—For the human mind may lose its energy as well as the body, and disease or long confinement, when its faculties have not full play or exercise, must in a great measure destroy its vigour.

It was in the infancy of states that the exertions of small communities being necessary to preserve them against the wanton attacks of their neighbours, that the superiority of individuals obtained them that ascendancy which their wisdom and intrepidity merited.—This it was that gave rise to the necessity of investing individuals with that power, upon which the safety of small dynasties depended.—The ambition of
reigning

reigning was found by the aspiring to be a defirable thing. Hence originated *Tyrants* and their *Satellites* or *Myrmidons*, called *Nobility*—hence proceeded those tumults, massacres, and contentions for power, which for such a length of time disturbed the repose of the world in the sacrifice of millions of human victims; and which have not yet ceased to spread their horrors and desolation—and it was only from the progress of knowledge that man ever would have been able to regain that equality of which he had been surreptitiously robbed by power, which had secured to itself the exercise of functions or prerogatives that had only been delegated in trust for particular purposes—and hence it was, that all the governments in the world have risen unfavourable to our dignity and equality; and it is the business of reason to bring it back to a state coeval with man, that his rights may be clearly ascertained, and fixed upon the immoveable basis of justice and humanity.

LORD DES. You have defined very well, but rather severely, the origin of power; though

though you have not proved that society can exist without it; and at the same time you have almost demonstrated, that much danger is to be apprehended from the passions of men, if they are not properly restrained.

EQUA. Society cannot exist without power, I acknowledge, my lord.—But it ought to be the sovereignty of the laws in the hands of the civil power, created upon the eternal rules of humanity, reason, and equality. As to severity, I can have no idea of treating principles with tenderness which are in their nature unfociable.

LORD DES. Is not such the grounds of the government of this country?

EQUA. No.—Your distinctions are hereditary; and your power, as a House of Lords, is a subversion of the principles of reason and equality, and consequently an encroachment upon the rights of men, as it gives the power to a set of them, to legislate for a country, to which the people never
gave

gave their consent; and whether wise or foolish, they have been hitherto obliged to abide by the consequences.

It is true, the spirit of Englishmen has often checked the strides of your ambition, and kept you in some degree of awe. But as they know of no authority by which you continue to exercise powers, without being amenable to the empire of truth, in contempt of reason, they are determined, by an analysis of political knowledge, to form the basis of their representative system upon the principles of common sense and reciprocity, *i. e.* to let every man, and class of men, be fairly represented: For, they are weary of hearing of the benefits which our glorious constitution has produced us, when they every day see, in the government, the most wanton exercise of favouritism, in open violation of every principle of equity, to the prejudice of merit and talents, shamelessly disregarding every appearance of moderation, which the most licentious individuals are obliged to preserve:—and, when too, it is a known maxim in reason, that the depravity of men will

will be in proportion to the unjust ministry of the country in which they live.

Another cause why men, in some instances, have discovered the most atrocious passions, is, that in the accumulation of their artificial wants, their passions have found a stimulus to their gratifications, which have not been properly checked by an enlightened morality; for instead of having them corrected by the justice and precision of laws, the inequality or disproportion of punishments, in many cases, have encouraged the abandoned, while the cruel policy of states has hardened them in vice: hence the frequent commission of the most degrading crimes have tended to produce erroneous opinions respecting the constitution and passions of man, and which have sullied his dignity as a reasonable being.

LORD DES. If I understand you rightly, EQUALITY, it is the object of your societies to simplify laws, to give them precision, to annex distinction and honours only to merit, to give power only to law, to better the dispositions of men by the examples of government,

vernment, to extend equally the blessings of civilization to all descriptions and orders of men, and to correct the influence of that despotism which the usurpations of tyrants have introduced into every part of the political machine of governments; and which has acted with such subtlety, that to detect and overturn it required the luminous rays of philosophy?

EQUA. Exactly so.

LORD DES. I am already more than half convinced of the propriety of your measures—at any rate the experiment must be a glorious one, and I will henceforth renounce my title and enlist under your banners.

EQUA. We shall receive you with pleasure.

MR. CONVERT, *late* LORD DESPOTISM. There is one thing, brother EQUALITY, that appears to me not a little extraordinary; it is, the means by which you acquired
so

so much knowledge of philosophy, the progress of governments, and the advantages of civilization.

EQUA. I have for a length of time belonged to a reading society; and as it was not rich, and could only afford to buy a few books, we requested our curate to point out the most valuable upon arts and government, which he most readily did; and said at the same time, that no one thing injured so much the judgment of men, as reading so many indigested publications as were continually produced to the world; which only tended to bewilder their understanding and generate error: and added, he thought it would be a wise measure in governments, since the conduct of reviewers were become so contemptibly venal, to follow the example of the Curate and Barber, who held an inquisition upon the chivalrous library of the renowned knight Don Quixotte, and establish a tribunal, supported by and under the controul of the people, with authority to examine all publications, and to destroy all such as might have a per-

nicious tendency, which would in a material degree lessen such errors; and which, doubtless, will continue to creep into the minds of men, while so many of those crude and fallacious works now extant are read.

This tribunal, it was his opinion, ought to be permanent, and invested with power to afford encouragement to indigent virtue and talents; by which means, he said, it would be morally certain that the world would derive all possible advantage from the art of printing, without its abuses.

MR. CON. It is a good idea of the curate's. All my political errors have arisen from the source of reading injudicious publications: and I think if such an institution could be carried into effect without endangering the liberty of the press, it would most likely be productive of ends the most salutary.

EQUA. The liberty of the press is certainly one of our most inestimable privileges, and we cannot guard it with too much vigilance. But when the foundation
of

of equal liberty is fixed, and enthroned in the hearts of every citizen, a tribunal acting under the influence of responsibility (for I would have every man in the various political departments of a state paid for his services) ought, nor could not, with impunity, act retrograde to the trust in it reposed.

MR. CON. I think I now comprehend you perfectly, EQUALITY; it is from the precision of every political regulation that you expect the plain path of truth will secure fair administration—that you mean, whatever the people have given in trust for the purposes of general benefit, they have a right to demand from the trustees a full and just account of their ministry, and whenever it varies from the purposes of the delegation, they are at liberty to resume it again; and that paying all the officers of a state in proportion, or equal to their services, and making them amenable to the people for delinquency or weakness, would prevent the allurements of favour from influencing the indigent; and thereby the unbiaſſed

dictates of men of virtue and talents, acting under the controul of established reason, guided by a noble emulation, inspired by a generous applause, which the vigour and integrity of their actions would awaken, and thus would be produced eternal harmony among mankind.

EQUA. You have explained my meaning, MR. CONVERT, more fully than I had reason to expect my mode of conveying my ideas would have enabled you; and as I find you entirely comprehend the object of our societies, I must wish you a good morning, as my business demands my attention.

DIALOGUE IV.

MR. CON. **H**OW fares your neighbour the curate, friend EQUALITY?

EQUA. I have not seen him since Monday, when he was not recovered from the fatigue of a journey he had taken up to London, to ask of my Lord ARROGANCE a living in his gift, worth about sixty pounds annually; but after waiting several days in town, and having been detained for several hours each time in the servants' hall, without having been able to gain an audience with his lordship, and finding the little money and provision which he had taken with him for his subsistence was nearly exhausted, he was obliged to return unsuccessful.—Indeed, he told me, that he had been compelled to walk the two last days a hundred miles, without tasting sustenance of any sort.

MR. CON. I have reason, EQUALITY, to consider you as my best friend—I am made
so

so perfectly sensible of the unjust inequality which exists, not only among the clergy but among men throughout the world, that I now wonder I could, for such a length of time, have remained ignorant of the pernicious consequences of a system so odious and wicked.

I am shocked at the relation you have given me of the hardships your worthy friend has experienced—and when I figure to my mind the gloomy mansion of a virtuous man, where his sorrowful progeny are sitting with dejected looks, while the pale taper scarcely glimmers light sufficient to mark the sorrows of their sad residence—then contemplate the hideous noise of cold whistling winds, while the man who is withered by the chill hand of penury trembles at their pestilential breath;—and then contrast the life and situation of an industrious and sensible curate with the higher orders of the clergy, who are to be found in the glittering castles of luxurious plenty, where wax lights give brilliancy to the midnight hour, *while the orgies of Bacchus are celebrated with all the noise of confusion, intoxication, and folly,*

folly, I confess my indignant heart will not permit me to suppress its emotions.

EQUA. I perceive you are affected, MR.
CONVERT.

MR. CON. How is it possible to be otherwise, when I hear tales of the sort you have related?

EQUA. I am sorry it should have produced such an effect upon your sensibility; for it is not the practice of our society to appeal to the feelings of men, as we are sensible we have every sound reason on our side of the question.

MR. CON. What you have said has nothing to do with an appeal to the feelings; it was a simple tale, told without embellishment; and as I am perfectly well acquainted with Lord ARROGANCE and his whole family, I do not doubt a word of the matter.—My conversion was compleat before; and as I have not been accustomed to sensations of this kind, nature, as though
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she had been imposed upon, seems to act with more energy.

EQUA. Doubtless it is so. Hence it is that genius and talents have been more common in free countries, I mean countries which have been comparatively free, than in those where despotism has prevailed; and which is another powerful argument in favour of doing away all unnatural distinctions among men, as arrogance is the natural consequence of hereditary rank and power, and is every day marked with some affecting circumstance.

These circumstances have been flagrant for centuries past, and must continue, I am convinced, until virtue and talents find their level—until laws are founded in reason, and grafted upon benevolence—and until every description of men are considered to have the same feelings.

MR. CON. It is now about three months since I first conversed with you upon the subject of politics; during which time I have paid every attention to the subject
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that its importance required; and I am happy to acknowledge, that in consequence of the clue you gave me, I became acquainted with a person by the name of PHILANTHROPY, whose manners are so peculiarly soothing, that while I listened to his dictates, I was delighted with the joys which his eloquence inspired.

Some days since I dined in company with him at my Lord MISANTHROPY's, when the conversation after dinner, as is the custom at his lordship's table, was upon the achievements of tyrants over the lives and property of the unprotected, which he termed glorious.

I thought it a little odd at first, to meet two persons who never were acquainted, and of such opposite tempers, in company with each other, when I recollected that Mr. PHILANTHROPY was not only an advocate for the rights of man, but that he was a dangerous enemy to tyrants, and had suggested to me, a little time after my conversion, the idea, that if he could prevail upon his lordship to change his principles, and adopt those of his, that from such
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an accession to the cause of humanity, we should be able to root out all the evils that vain and inhuman conquerors are continually heaping upon mankind.

EQUA. That is calculating largely upon his own principles. However, as it is the object of our investigations to simplify the modes of instruction, in order that the capacities of all men may receive the advantages of reason, it is our practice to converse in the plainest way, and to make use of the most appropriate words, that they may have all possible energy.

Be so good as to forgive this interruption, Mr. **CONVERT**—for you appeared to be talking in a kind of allegorical style, which, to me, is perfectly unintelligible ; for which reason I beg that you will give some explanation to what you have been saying, before you proceed any farther.

MR. CON. I hope you will excuse me, **EQUALITY**, but I really thought you would have understood me, or I should have taken
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a different method to have conveyed my ideas.

The two gentlemen I have alluded to are real beings, but the names fictitious; and you know that philanthropy is the love, and misanthropy the hatred, of mankind; now, as these two dispositions are utterly at variance with each other, and as misanthropy is the cause of all the evils that have been brought upon men, I was thinking if it could be contrived to ameliorate the unnatural habits which some men have imbibed, we should most readily elevate the human character to that dignified state, which appears to form your primary object.

EQUA. I now perfectly understand you, and wish you to proceed.

MR. CON. I am sensible, from my own feelings, and the reflections that have followed my conviction, that the great fault is in education, as you have well observed; and nothing could more effectually prove to me the certainty of this truth, than

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the conversation I am going to relate, which passed between two gentlemen, and who I shall call Mr. PHILANTHROPY and Lord MISANTHROPY; for I am sorry to say, it is very uncommon for noblemen to be friends to mankind.

Lord MISANTHROPY, immediately after dinner, began with railing against, whom he termed, the perfidious French, and whom he accused of having every vicious quality, and of having given every possible proof of the most wanton and sacrilegious dispositions in the imprisonment of their King and his august Consort; and which was now aggravated by their inhumanly bringing them to a mock trial, as he called their open and fair manner of proceeding in that business.

To which Mr. PHILANTHROPY, with the most benignant countenance, and with the most ravishing tones, replied, " My lord, the
 " miseries of every human being are to me a
 " heart-afflicting consideration; and if to
 " resign my life would alleviate human dis-
 " tress, I would most readily lay it down:
 " but when I figure to myself the number of
 " poor

“ poor unfortunate beings, who would have
 “ been ruined by the wanton and unprece-
 “ dented attacks of confederated Tyrants,
 “ and who would most likely at this mo-
 “ ment have been suffering all the horrors
 “ which the iron and desolating hand of
 “ war never fails to inflict upon the honest
 “ husbandmen of the country which is so
 “ unfortunate as to be its seat, now re-
 “ compensated by their generous nation—
 “ when I reflect upon what would have
 “ been the fate of the poor cottager, whose
 “ ambition was limited to his patch of
 “ pulse, whose habitation, where the weary
 “ or benighted traveller had always met
 “ with an honest welcome, now razed to
 “ the earth, and his little lot of ground,
 “ once the pride and comfort of his life,
 “ where he once had led the creeping vine
 “ to ascend to the thatched canopy that
 “ secured him from the inclemency of the
 “ season, which grew, and in blooming clus-
 “ ters matured his joys, and cheered his
 “ friendly guests during the long nights of
 “ solitary winter; now uprooted, and this
 “ unfortunate man and his infant family,

“ who would have been wandering, wretched, unnoticed, and unpitied, had it not been for the justice of those people who you represent as inhuman;—and then compare the ambitious and unfeeling projects of the court of the unfortunate Lewis, with the dignity and moderation of the present ruling party in France, how much more reason have I to applaud than to condemn !”

To which my Lord MISANTHROPY, who had appeared impatient from the moment Mr. PHILANTHROPY had began, replied in terms so harsh and discordant, that my feelings were compleatly distressed.

“ Mr. PHILANTHROPY, you talk as if those poor wretches, those cottagers, were possessed of feelings equal to a king or queen; and it appears to me that you have lost all reverence for majesty.”

Mr. PHILANTHROPY answered, by saying, his reverence for majesty never permitted him to forget the sufferings of any human being, who were by nature equal; and consequently laws ought to secure them the same protection, the same privileges, and
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to attach to every individual respectability in proportion to their virtues and worth. " And if kings and queens," said he, " or " any other titled being, by their intrigues " or otherwise, should attempt to destroy " the rights of citizenship, they deserve to " suffer equally as severely as any other " description of persons—Indeed, as GOD " created man in every respect equal, it is " a sacrilege and profane to doubt his " OMNISCIENCE—for it is not only a folly " to question the WISDOM of PROVIDENCE, " but it is a robbery against heaven to " elevate one man at the expence of another."

LORD MISANTHROPY retorted, by exclaiming, that he did not doubt but Mr. PHILANTHROPY would rejoice if those miscreants, who styled themselves a Convention, were to butcher their majesties.

" It is not in my nature to rejoice at " any circumstance but the happiness of " mankind," said Mr. PHILANTHROPY; " and as I detest the practice of making " wanton sacrifices of human beings, I " should be very sorry to hear that they " should

“ should suffer any hardships, much less
 “ death—and as I conceive the French na-
 “ tion have obtained their great point, that
 “ of having established a constitution, or at
 “ least laid the foundation of it, upon prin-
 “ ciples of equality and reciprocal benefits
 “ to every description of citizens; and as
 “ it ought to be the wisdom of governments
 “ to punish men only to deter the com-
 “ mission of crimes; and as there are to be
 “ no more kings and queens in France,
 “ which will prevent the possibility of the
 “ renewal of such follies as have marked
 “ their guilt;—I flatter myself the French
 “ will have the generosity to forgive them;
 “ and I have no doubt, but their gratitude
 “ will then teach them to become good
 “ citizens: and that they may live to see
 “ their own errors shall be my constant and
 “ most fervent prayers.”

As Mr. PHILANTHROPY observed that his
 Lordship began to be touched with senti-
 ments so consistently humane, he went on
 thus:—

“ There is in benevolence a secret in-
 “ fluence that tends to check every radical
 “ vice,

“ vice, and wherever it reaches, it is sure to
 “ warm the hearts of men into a rational
 “ enthusiasm for the good of their fellow
 “ creatures, and ultimately to give them a
 “ due sense of the natural equality of man.

“ It is the only ladder by which we are
 “ enabled to mount to the regions of joy—
 “ and it is by its extension that general
 “ liberty will not only meliorate the con-
 “ dition of men, but it will afford a prop to
 “ FREEDOM; while Tyranny, prostrate before
 “ its gates, will be forgotten, and the reign
 “ of PEACE, in all her irradiating charms,
 “ will secure to man the blandishments of
 “ love, while the arms of FRIENDSHIP will
 “ be extended to every quarter of the
 “ GLOBE, and in its mighty, but tender
 “ grasp, embrace all human-kind.”

Lord MISANTHROPY seemed, for the first
 time in his life, quite delighted; and con-
 fessed his error, by saying, he never had
 taken up the subject in a proper light, and
 was now perfectly convinced of the equality
 of man.

F I N I S.